

How the Printed Page Will Help to Solve After-the-War Problems in the Moslem World

By Rev. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D., F.R.G.S., of Cairo

The power of the printed page as an evangelistic agency has not yet been realized: although it is obvious that it can never be a substitute for the living voice, it is often true that the message in this form is more persuasive, more permanent, and reaches a larger audience than that spoken by human lips. The printed page is the ubiquitous missionary and the printed message has often entered closed lands and penetrated into the most secluded villages. Twenty years ago a missionary in Arabia received an order for the Bible, a Commentary, and a Concordance from Mecca itself. In many lands the post office has become an evangelistic agency. It carries Christian literature unobtrusively into the homes of all classes, and those who have tried this method are enthusiastic regarding its effectiveness and comparative economy. Our readers know of the strength, the enterprise and the growth of the Moslem Press in recent years, especially in Egypt, Persia and Russia. Attention is called in this number to the extent of the Turkish Press and its power in binding together the Turkish races.

Experiments made in Egypt on a small scale have, even during the days of war, shown that it is possible to use the newspapers of the Far East to get a hearing for the Gospel Message. What has been done on these lines, and on a large scale, in Japan and China might also well be attempted, at least in a measure, for Moslems.

"The Apostle Paul at Athens," says Dr. Albertus Pieters, "disputed in the market daily, because the market place was where the Athenians congregated to do their buying and selling, and to discuss questions of public interest. This is not done *in the market place* nowadays, either in Amer-

ica, or in Japan, but *in the newspapers*. Not to speak of public discussion, which goes without saying, the very buying and selling are done in the papers, for the most difficult and essential part of the salesman's work, that of inducing the customer to desire his wares, is done in the newspapers." We must induce those who have no interest in the Gospel Message to read the book by advertising its contents, and compel men to answer the question, "What think ye of the Christ?" by facing them with the facts of His life and death and resurrection power. Much has been written on the importance of the Christian Press, but nothing is more interesting and up to date than some passages in the old classic, Bunyan's *The Holy War*. Everything he says in that book regarding Ear-gate and Eye-gate is suggestive. For example, what could better describe the battle of the Press in Cairo:—

"I saw the battering rams, and how they played
To beat ope Ear-gate, and I was afraid,
Not only Ear-gate, but the very town
Would by those battering rams be beaten down.
I saw the fights, and heard the captain shout,
And in each battle saw who faced about:
I saw who wounded were, and who were slain;
And who when dead would come to life again."

Of the Moslem world in general as of the human heart in particular, we may truly say, that "Lord Willbewill took special care that the gates should be secured with double guards, double bolts, and double locks and bars. And that Ear-gate (especially) might the better be looked to, for that was the gate which the King's forces sought most to enter; so he made one old Mr. Prejudice (an angry and ill-conditioned fellow) captain of the ward at that gate, and put under his power sixty men, called Deaf-men; men advantageous for that service, forasmuch as they mattered no words of the captains, nor of their soldiers." But afterwards in the allegory, the city of Man-soul is taken through Ear-gate and Eye-gate, Mr. Prejudice is kicked and tumbled down in the dirt and "from Ear-gate the street ran straight to the house of Mr. Recorder": for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

It is a remarkable testimony to the power of the printed page that nearly all the enquirers in Moslem lands have first been led to Christ by means of a book or tract. It is because of this that every missionary should try to be a colporteur and tract distributor. Neither poverty of purse nor pride of position, nor prejudice against this method because it is sometimes abused, should prevent him from having at hand in his

pocket and reception room an adequate quantity and variety of Christian literature. This method of approach is open to all, and if it is followed with sympathy, it is everywhere welcomed.

Because of the neglect of the printed page by so many societies and workers, we need prayer that new writers may be raised up of God, that funds and leisure may be found to make present workers more effective; that the message of the printed page may be a tongue of fire, and that all that is written may be founded on first hand Oriental experience, not on translations of incidents and stories from the West. Above all, we need to hold before us the real aim of Christian literature: it is to quicken hearts and build up character. There has been enough literature of the controversial type, destructively critical of Islam. These books were useful in their day and still have a place, and an important place, as the plough-share for the sowing of the Truth; but a new era calls for a new program. We need a careful survey of the real *desiderata* and a larger co-operation between Western Asia and North Africa after the war. The Arabic speaking lands are practically a unit as regards the character of literature required. Whether this literature should be in classical Arabic or in the various vernaculars is really a subordinate question. We need a vision of the whole task. Now is the opportunity to break away from old precedents in the preparation and distribution of literature, if they have been based upon old prejudices. There are new ways for presenting the one and only Gospel. The war has taught us many lessons, but none more clearly than the power of the Press. During the present war the Press was used to sow intrigue and sedition. It has also been used with telling effect to instruct and enlighten the masses concerning the real issues of the war, to awaken a sense of loyalty and arouse a spirit of sacrifice. In this respect Rudyard Kipling is among the prophets. Has he not said:

“The Pope may launch his Interdict,
The Union its decree:
But the bubble is blown and the bubble is pricked
By Us and such as We;
Remember the battle and stand aside
While thrones and powers confess
That King over all the children of Pride
Is the Press—the Press—the Press!”

What Americans Are Doing to Help Solve the Problem

The American Christian Literature Society for Moslems

By Rev. CHARLES R. WATSON D.D., President

There are some things which Missionary Societies have found they can do better unitedly than independently. One of these is the production and distribution of Christian literature.

In 1910, through the zeal and initiative of Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, a group of friends were brought together for consultation and prayer, with a view to providing an American base for the Nile Mission Press of London, with which Dr. Zwemer was actively connected. This group organized "The New York Auxiliary of the Nile Mission Press" and through their efforts \$29,200 was raised for the building in Cairo which the Nile Mission Press now uses as its headquarters in Egypt. In addition to this, contributions were obtained for the printing and distribution of literature.

As time elapsed, and the contacts of the Auxiliary multiplied, an earnest desire manifested itself among donors for an independent American organization which might make a stronger appeal to American givers, and which might also widen the scope of its services so as to co-operate directly with agencies producing and distributing literature in other Moslem areas than Egypt. Thus it came about that in 1915, the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems (alphabetically referred to as the A. C. L. S. M.) was organized and incorporated. On its Board of Managers are representatives of at least five different churches and missionary bodies, so that the interdenominational and union character of the organization is well established.

The Society's methods of work are simple and safe. For the guidance of the Board of Managers in the making of appropriations, Advisory Committees are formed in the areas

in which it is desired to work. These committees are made up of representatives of missions operating within the missionary areas and serve to acquaint the American society with the needs of these fields and the mature judgment of these missions. Prayer Circles have been formed at a number of points, and there are strong Auxiliaries at other points co-operating in extending interest and support. The treasurer of the Society is Mrs. E. E. Olcott (322 West 75th Street, New York City) and the corresponding secretary, Mrs. J. M. Montgomery (P. O. Box 888, New York City). These and other workers render volunteer service so that all funds contributed are sent direct to the fields.

Last year the Society's activities centered in Egypt. Through its Advisory Committee, publication of literature such as the following was promoted: "The Sinlessness of the Prophets," "Bible Exposition Series," "El Hadaya," "Choice Sermons," "Character of Jesus," "Fact of Christ," "Many Infallible Proofs," and "Marks of a Man."

Through the co-operation of the Society a gift of \$2,000 was secured from the Milton Stewart Evangelistic Fund for the publication of Dr. Torrey's book, "What the Bible Teaches," and a number of tracts. Over \$17,000 was also forwarded to the Nile Mission Press from the estate of the late William W. Borden.

The Society is now extending its activities to two new spheres. First China. This decision followed immediately upon the visit of Dr. Zwemer, the Society's original founder, to China. The attention of the missionary forces in China has been turned to what is not so much a peril as a rare opportunity—a hitherto undeveloped opportunity—of winning Chinese Moslems to Christ. Into this field, whose first requirements lie along the line of Christian literature, the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems desires to enter in co-operation with other stronger agencies.

The other field into which the Society wishes to enter, at least in a co-operative way, is that of Moslem childhood. Islam has cruelly shortened childhood days. It has thrust boys and girls all too soon into the responsibilities and realities of adult life. But under Western and especially Christian influence, this period of childhood is being extended. It needs enriching. This calls for Christian literature especially adapted to children.

It is time that Christians were stirred deeply to engage a marked forward movement to give the Gospel to Moslems at this time.

The power of the Turk is waning. This is an historical fact which places a new significance upon the opportunity for freedom of thought within the Moslem world. Across the past century Mohammedan political power has been disintegrating, but Turkish rule vanished from Egypt with the beginning of this war when a British Protectorate was declared. From Mesopotamia and Persia the Turk is also withdrawing. These are great movements of God. Because the power of the Turk is waning a new day of freedom in thought-life and in religious life is dawning. This is a challenge for a forward movement in the production of Christian literature.

The horizon of Islam is broadening. Few there are who realize how wonderfully this war is being used to broaden the thought-life of Islam. From Algeria and Tunisia, from Egypt and India thousands of Moslems have gone to France to serve either in the native battalions or in the fighting ranks. As these go back to their homes in the hinterlands of Africa, in the remote villages of India, they will tell the story of how they went over the great waters, how they saw the white man's houses rising to the very heavens, and how his great cities are spread out like the forests of Africa. And as they talk, and talk, and talk—as they undoubtedly will—the horizons of Mohammedanism that were hitherto so contracted and narrow, so hedged in by ignorance and prejudice, will be pushed back and broadened as they never have been before. With this broadening of the horizon of Islam, a new opportunity develops for Christian literature.

The influence of Christianity is penetrating. During the war Robert College at Constantinople and the Woman's College on the Bosphorus have continued in operation and the children of leading families in Turkey have been in attendance. The influence of Christianity is penetrating into every circle of Mohammedan life. The old days of Islam have passed. A new day has dawned and it calls for Christian literature.

The alignment of Mohammedanism is changing. The sword of Islam has been broken, but this does not mean the disappearance of the Moslem faith. It simply means a new alignment. The old argument of force is ruled out, but a new argument has appeared, the argument of reason. The centre of influence in the Mohammedan world has shifted from the political centre at Constantinople to the intellectual centre at Cairo. Because of all this, the printed page gains a new significance. Christian literature takes on a new value.

Lastly, the promises of God are challenging. We do not

despair of the Moslem world. We believe God is going to save the Moslem world, save its peoples from all those influences that have been their sorrow and their disgrace. Our eyes are seeing the very things for which men of faith have long waited and for which women of prayer have long interceded. In the proposed advance of this campaign of love the promises of God bulk large. Because we have these promises and because they challenge us to great expectations within the Moslem world, we must attempt great things along the lines of Christian literature for this Moslem world that it may be saved.

Dr. Zwemer makes a special appeal that during his stay in America the sum of \$25,000.00 be raised for Christian Literature, among Moslems. Some of this is for production and other for distribution.

A proposed allotment, subject to revision, is as follows:

"\$2,000.00 for printing 12 leaflets in the Sert and Turki languages for the Moslems of Russia;

"\$5,000.00 for the new publications in Chinese and Chinese-Arabic under the direction of the China Continuation Committee;

"\$3,000.00 for the free distribution and the payment of special Colportage in Arabia where the four mission societies face new opportunities because of the war;

"\$10,000.00 for production and distribution through the Nile Mission Press, including the plan of the Woman's Magazine, a New Testament Commentary and other books;

"\$5,000.00 for the Beirut Press which has suffered loss on account of the war."

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